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29 OCT 1998

Karl S. Sawyer :
Kennedy, Covington, Lobdell & Hickman, LLP : RESPONSE
NationsBank Corporate Center, Suite 4200 : TO
100 North Tryon Street : STATUS INQUIRY
Charlotte, N.C. 28202-4006 :

re: U.S. Application No. 09/029,401

Dear Mr. Sawyer,

This is in response to your letter received 03 August 1998 inquiring about the status of the U.S. national stage application filing of international application number PCT/DE96/02658.

On 19 February 1998, the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) received a "TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371" for international application number PCT/DE96/02658 accompanied by a basic national fee of \$930.00, a copy of another published international application, namely PCT/EP96/02658 (WO 97/48786) and a copy of the international search report for PCT/EP96/02658.

The DO/EO/US has not received a copy of international application number PCT/DE96/02658 and thus cannot ascertain its international filing date and priority date. Accordingly, although the transmittal letter filed 19 February 1998 submits the basic national fee for the national stage filing of PCT/DE96/02658, the DO/EO/US does not have the necessary papers to process the application under 35 U.S.C. 371.

The transmittal letter and accompanying papers filed 19 February 1998 have been assigned U.S. application number 09/029,401. For the reasons discussed above, however, the application's status cannot be ascertained without an appropriate copy of international application PCT/DE96/02658 as required under 35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2).

Processing of the present application is held in abeyance pending receipt of a copy of the international application (PCT/DE96/02658). Any future communication regarding this

application must be directed to U.S. application number 09/029,401 in accordance with 37 CFR 1.5.

Sincerely,



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